



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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LAND BOARD APPROVES AGREEMENT WITH NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FOR ALA KAHAKAI NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

-- DLNR presses on with 'Recreational Renaissance' goals despite bill's failure in Senate

HONOLULU – The Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) has approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Park Service and the County of Hawai'i for cooperative management of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail.

The "Ala Kahakai" is a proposed 175-mile system of coastal trails (ala loa) that connect historic shoreline communities, national, state and county parks, natural areas and resort and rural communities. It also connects all four National Parks on Hawaii Island and is the only National Historic Trail designation in Hawai'i and one of the 18 National Historic Trail designations in the U.S. along with the Iditarod, the Pony Express, the Trail of Tears, Nez Perce and the Lewis and Clark.

This shoreline trail corridor traverses Hawai'i island from 'Upolu Point, along the island's western shoreline through the Kohala, Kona, Ka'u and Puna districts and terminating at the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park's Puna boundary.

It crosses federal, state, county, and private land and contains sensitive Hawaiian cultural and natural resources. It is unique to the National Trail System in that the indigenous Hawaiian culture constructed portions of the proposed trail corridors in stone that are still widely used for daily coastal access, recreational, traditional and cultural experiences.

"This memorandum of understanding between DLNR, the National Park Service and Hawai'i County represents an important step to strengthen inter-agency partnerships and work with the community, to support recreational and educational opportunities, and ensure appropriate use and historic preservation objectives," said Laura H. Thielen, Land Board Chairperson.

DLNR identified the Ala Kahakai as connecting state coastal parks in West Hawaii as a signature project in its Recreational Renaissance bill, where people could hike and/or kayak and camp to enjoy this beautiful wilderness area. The Recreational Renaissance was the first major state initiative in decades which envisioned many planned improvements to parks, harbors and trails for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Thielen added, “Although the Senate did not pass the Recreational Renaissance bill, or any of the capital improvement projects that would have been funded with new, non-taxpayer revenue; we’re all encouraged and inspired by the strong support of the many recreational groups and communities who supported Senate Bill 636, and by the recreational needs expressed by Hawai‘i’s people in the updated Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (see plan on DLNR website at www.hawaii.gov/dlnr) that the Recreational Renaissance was designed to address,” she continued.

“DLNR intends to move forward with the broad public support to maintain these important recreational places. We are now busily working on our ‘Plan B’ to attempt to achieve as many of these objectives as we are able to do with limited resources,” Thielen said.

MOU participating agencies agree to work together to implement the trail’s Comprehensive Management Plan which NPS adopted in March of this year. The MOU will set the stage for programmatic agreements and administrative guidelines to manage the trail’s resources as appropriate and feasible.

The National Park Service will act as lead agency in coordinating and management activities. DLNR will coordinate technical support from its historic preservation, conservation and coastal lands, state parks, land, forestry and wildlife divisions.

“The National Park Service wishes to thank Chairperson Thielen and the Land Board for their decision to enter into this MOU. This partnership with the State and County will allow for increased community-based involvement in the management of trails that aims at perpetuating traditional practices, protecting cultural and natural resources and meeting the need for recreational opportunities along Hawaii Island’s western shoreline,” said Aric Arakaki, Superintendent, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail.

Hawai‘i County’s Planning Department will enforce county and state laws requiring public access to and along the shoreline as a condition of land use approvals and permits. The County’s Department of Parks and Recreation will work with NPS and local communities on trail management planning for trail segments passing through county parks.

Hawai‘i Mayor Billy Kenoi said, “We are very excited to be a part of this historic agreement establishing Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail on the Island of Hawai‘i. We are proud to be the stewards of this precious cultural and recreational resource, which will be the first National Historic Trail in the state..

“We are especially pleased with the spirit of cooperation between our county, the state and federal government that helped bring this about. These collaborative projects are extremely important to our future as a county and state...

“We look forward to honoring and preserving our indigenous cultural past while appropriately serving our future recreational needs in Hawai‘i...

“Mahalo also to Sen. Daniel Akaka who introduced the legislation in Congress in 2000 which led to the signing of this memorandum. This truly is a great day for our beautiful Island of Hawai‘i,” Kenoi said.

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It is the only National Historic Trail designated in Hawai‘i.

This partnership is intended to help increase community-based management of trails, perpetuate traditional practices, protect cultural and natural resources and meet the need for recreational opportunities along Hawaii Island’s western shoreline.

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